

The 1954 Liberty Series and Its Uses

The Liberty Series, also known as the Sixth Bureau Issue, is named after the 3-cent, 8-cent, and 11-cent values picturing the Statue of Liberty. The series started out as a set of seventeen different subjects with eighteen denominations, printed in formats of sheet panes, booklet panes, and coils. The eighteen denominations for the Liberties were selected to ensure no more than two stamps were necessary to pay up to sixty cents in postage, nor more than three for up to \$1.60. Over time, eight denominations were added to the original plan (1.25-cent, 2.5-cent, 4.5-cent, 8-cent Pershing, 11-cent, 12-cent, 15-cent, and 25-cent).

The Eisenhower Administration wished to project a political message with religious overtones. The 8-cent red, white, and blue Statue of Liberty stamp, issued on April 9, 1954, was the first of the series. The premiere of this stamp was actually broadcast on national television with President Dwight David Eisenhower presiding. The series was in general use from 1954 through 1973, though some stamps in the series remained on sale through the 1980s.

Famous portrait artists and photographers' works were used as the basis for the designs. The portraits shown on these stamps are warm and inviting, a definite contrast to previous images shown on our nation's stamps. This series is also noted for a number of graphic design and technological innovations, and the need to more effectively and mechanically manage a huge increase in the volume of mail.

All stamps were produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and most were printed by the rotary press. The 8-cent Statue of Liberty was printed on both the flat plate and the Stickney rotary presses. A third version of the 8-cent Liberty as well as the 11-cent Liberty was also printed on the new Giori Press. The 5-dollar Hamilton was printed only on the flat plate press. Other innovations included the use of "dry" as opposed to "wet" paper, and the phosphor tagging of stamps to facilitate automatic mail processing. Further, the coil varieties had large (normal size) perforation holes and later, small perforation holes.

The final stamp in the Liberty Series was issued on February 25, 1965, in Boston, the 25-cent coil featuring Paul Revere, and remained on sale officially until April 30, 1987, a remarkable 22-year run.

For ease of viewing and for coherence, this exhibit is arranged by denomination and their uses. The only exceptions to this are the FIPEX souvenir sheet and postcard, and postal stationery.

Source material:

Encyclopedia of United States Stamps and Stamp Collecting, May 16, 2006

National Postal Museum website, Arago, Liberty Series

The Liberty Series: Lawrence, Eeles and Wawrukiewicz

Wikipedia: History of United States Postal Service rates

www.usstamps.org/glossary

Yahoo Groups: 1954 Liberty Series Group

This exhibit was created using Stamp Album Studio 2.0 and printed on a Canon iP4300 printer.